

Conversation with John Hightower 6:30 p.m., October 31, 1962:

Mr. Hightower said he wanted to do a story for Sunday regarding the significance of this experience we have been through up to this point. Is it possible to draw any conclusions that we told the Russians in plain words, "This far and no further?"

Mr. Hilsman replied that he didn't know if it was wise to publish this, but that we knew we were stronger, and continued by saying this brings him to another point, that there is an attack on the intelligence community that maybe we could have picked it up a few days earlier, but I would only say that you don't walk up to within 3 steps of a nuclear war unless you know you have the facts straight. This was an intelligence ~~discovery~~ victory. We caught them with their rockets down and their missiles showing. Our basic prediction was correct. Our first victory was that we caught them. Our second was that we predicted they would be taking a great gamble and that we should be on the lookout for it. Third, we were absolutely right in predicting that they were weaker and would have to back down. I think this is a real intelligence victory. (The conversation was continued, but I was unable to monitor any more of it).